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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003240

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQIS CONDEMN PKK ATTACK ON TURKISH ARMY OUTPOST

REF: A. BAGHDAD 3062

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1732

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Both GOI and Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) leaders were quick to publicly condemn the October 3 evening terrorist attack by Kongra-Gel (PKK) rebels on a Turkish military outpost situated on the Iraq-Turkey border. KRG leaders firmly denied a subsequent Turkish accusation that they had provided help to the PKK rebels. The Embassy continues to push KRG leaders to put much more pressure on the PKK. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) On October 4, Turkey's Special Envoy to Iraq Murat Ozcelik called PMIN about the PKK attack of a Turkish military base near Semdinli, killing 15 soldiers. Ozcelik mentioned that the rebels from the direction of Iraq had used heavy weapons. Ozcelik noted that the Turkish ambassador had raised the attack with the Iraqi authorities, including GOI spokesman Ali Dabbagh, on the morning of October 4. Ozcelik noted that some "groups" in Ankara wanted to implicate the KRG in the attack, which would raise pressure in Ankara for a very tough response. Ozcelik urged that the U.S. weigh in with the Iraqi and Kurdistan regional authorities to secure clear denunciations.

Talabani Moves to Limit Damage

[1](#)3. (C) In response to Ozeclik's call, immediately upon his October 4 arrival in Sulemaniya, the Ambassador discussed the incident with President Jalal Talabani, DPM Barham Salih, and VP Tariq al-Hashimi. He warned them to get out in front of this situation, publicly condemn the attack, and call their Turkish counterparts. He expressed concern about escalating cross-border operations and pressed Talabani to urge calm on both sides. Talabani wholeheartedly agreed, saying that there is no justification for attacks from Iraqi soil onto foreign lands. He remarked that he has good relations with Turkish President Gul, who already has agreed to visit Iraq soon. Talabani pledged to use sharp language in condemning the PKK. He promised to urge KRG PM Nechirvan Barzani and KRG President Massoud Barzani to issue public statements.

KRG AND GOI CONDEMN PKK ATTACK

[1](#)4. (U) Late on October 4, the KRG issued an official statement saying that the KRG condemned the attack by elements of the PKK on the Turkish military base in the region of Shamzinan (Semdinli). In addition, the statement said that the KRG did not consider such actions as serving peace and "brotherly co-existence" in the region. On October 5, media outlets in Iraq published a statement from Kurdistan's Presidency, reiterating that "violence and military operations neither achieve any objectives nor serve any side." On October 5, KRG Chief of Staff Fuad Hussein denied to the press that the KRG provided any kind of support

to the PKK for the attack and that the PKK did not receive any weapons from "Iraqi Kurdistan."

15. (U) At the national level, press reports indicated that President Talabani spoke to President Abdullah Gul and condemned the attacks while expressing his outrage that the group conducted the attack during the Eid holiday. On October 5, GOI official spokesperson Ali al-Dabbagh also condemned the PKK terrorist attack bordering Turkey, adding that the attack is considered a real and dangerous threat to Iraq-Turkey security efforts bordering the region. Dabbagh added that the GOI was calling on the Turkish Government to exercise self-restraint lest the terrorist group make political gains with the Semdenli attack. Dabbagh expressed the GOI's support for the security measures taken by the Turkish authorities on the Turkish side of the border.

Will the foreign ministers talk?

16. (C) On October 5, PolOff urged Foreign Minister Zebari to talk to Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan to make sure the Iraqi position was clear to Ankara. FM Zebari noted that he was working the first high level Egyptian visit to Iraq since 1990, but promised to call that evening. Zebari's aide Qusay al-Kubaysi told PolOff that Zebari scheduled an October 6 meeting with the Turkish Ambassador to Iraq Derya Kanbay. On October 6, al-Kubaysi intimated that he had been trying to connect FM Zebari with FM Babacan, but Babacan was refusing the call. (Note: Al-Kubaysi has yet to break the news to Zebari until after he meets with Turkey's Ambassador Kanbay,

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telling Zebari that Babacan has been tied up in meetings. End
Note)
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